



## **Fairfax County Community Chaplain Corps**

# **Ethics, Principles and Practices**

### **I. Statement of Ethics and Guiding Principles**

1. Chaplains will demonstrate utmost personal and professional integrity: truthfulness, honesty, compassion and careful attention.
2. Chaplains will provide an objective, appropriate, holistic support and a comforting presence.
3. Chaplains will not proselytize. Those who are cared for will be provided freedom from unwanted gifts of religious literature or symbols, evangelistic and sermonizing speech, or forced acceptance of specific moral values and traditions.
4. Chaplains will demonstrate sensitivity to all faith traditions and provide appropriate and sensitive spiritual care to all persons in need, irrespective of their religious or non- religious identity.
5. Chaplains will not discriminate, with regards to their care, based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disabilities, socioeconomic status, or any other factors that would hamper a person's ability to receive spiritual care.
6. Chaplains will, whenever possible, attempt to locate a spiritual leader within the faith tradition of an affected person, if needed.
7. Out of respect for those who are served, Chaplains will maintain confidentiality.
8. Chaplains recognize their personal and professional limits, know their boundaries and make referrals to professionals with appropriate expertise.
9. Chaplains will do no harm.
10. Chaplains will not self-deploy to a disaster scene.
11. Chaplains are volunteers and will take no monetary gifts from those who are served.
12. Chaplains shall adhere to all applicable Codes of Ethical Standards as prescribed by their current professional status, affiliated and/or credentialing organizations.

13. Chaplains will undertake ongoing training to maintain knowledge and skill levels in crisis chaplaincy.
14. Chaplains shall not diagnose mental health or other medical issues.

## **II. Statement of Scope of Practices**

- a. Chaplains will follow the National Incident Management System (NIMS) at the scene of a critical incident and report to the appropriate commanding officer, shelter director or coordinating chaplain. If NIMS is not activated, chaplains are to follow the directions of county emergency management, police, fire and rescue personnel.
- b. Chaplains may be asked to provide a public invocation, speech, reading, prayer, or benediction under the auspices of this county program. Such occasions are not considered to be religious services. Language used at such occasions should be universally acceptable and non-sectarian/non-specific to any one religious belief. Chaplains will not be required to lead public prayer, if doing so in such a context would be at variance with their conscience or practices of their faith group.
- c. Chaplains should be flexible and be willing to provide a ministry of presence as well as perform other duties as requested by the incident commander.
- d. Chaplains must avoid putting themselves in harm's way and be cognizant of safety measures at all times.
- e. Chaplains who are on-call must respond immediately by telephone to the request for chaplain assistance.
- f. Chaplains who are deployed should be prepared to serve up to a 12 hour operational period per day.
- g. Chaplain shall maintain their visibility at all times by wearing the chaplain vest and displaying their chaplain credentials when performing such duties.